When Collin called Gladys "ho" it was like a slap in the face from way across the color divide. That made it sting.

I believe Collin meant nothing by it. Once in the dining-room he asked me if I were married. I said no. He asked me if I had a girlfriend. I said no. He asked me if I had a boyfriend. I said no. Finally he asked me if I wanted one. I said no, I was a loner. He hadn't been nosy or insulting. He'd been sympathetic. It was all natural to him. I don't think he had any prejudice.

I heard him talking to Adam one evening. Collin was crouching by the garbage cans outside the office. Adam was bending over him. I had just emerged from the office where I'd been dispensing supper-time meds. Collin was angry. He said he just wanted to go home. He missed his family. He didn't like it here. Adam said he understood. He was sorry. There was nothing he could do. I thought I detected genuine sympathy. From what I now know about Adam, it was.

Adam told me, I think in the course of our discussion about suicide, that he'd never been "that way." He'd had "reality problems." Something happened to Adam when he was a teenager, after which he referred to himself as "high school Adam." He'd dropped out.

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